

**Statement of the Honorable Gerald W. Hyland
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Mount Vernon District
House Committee on Government Reform
August 31, 2006**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee for holding this hearing and allowing me to give testimony on behalf of the residents of Mount Vernon, Lorton and southeastern Fairfax County.

The Department of Defense's decision to relocate over 22,000 employees to Fort Belvoir is a challenge for Fairfax County that carries as much promise as problems. Promising is the fact that these employees and whatever other contractors that follow in suit may help realize many of Fairfax County's revitalization goals for the Richmond Highway and Springfield areas. However, it is problematic that, if BRAC is not funded and implemented properly, it will cause thousands of regional commuters and relocated BRAC workers to become stuck in gridlock, unable to get to their jobs and accomplish their missions.

When the BRAC recommendation was first announced, Fairfax County made its concerns and suggestions known to the Army. Fairfax County advocated for the several BRAC related agencies to be spread out among different locations to offset the transportation impacts. After the Army decided to concentrate 18,000 of the 22,000 DoD employees, as well as the National Museum of the United States Army, which will attract at least 1.5 million visitors a year, to the Engineer Proving Grounds, it became apparent that our concerns and suggestions were ignored. While the Army has told us that these locations are not set in stone, my gut tells me that probably not much will change from the proposed plan unless through your oversight, Mr. Chairman, the Congress weighs in and establishes a different direction for this major development.

Supervisor Kauffman will address the significant transportation infrastructure issues in his testimony. I want to focus on the National Museum of the United States Army. The Fairfax County Board has long been the lead proponent for bringing the Army Museum to our area and we have demonstrated our support with substantial cash contributions to ensure the museum's completion. However, our support for the museum came with

the clear understanding that it would be located at Pence Gate, off Richmond Highway, as a mutually beneficial lever for revitalization and tourism income.

When Senator Strom Thurmond introduced legislation to locate the Army Museum at Fort Belvoir, he stressed that its proximity to Washington D.C. and Mount Vernon made it a most suitable location. The Engineer Proving Grounds is anything but suitable. What was envisioned from the beginning was a historic destination in southeast Fairfax County that would give families the chance to take a day or two to explore our country's founding and the leaders and soldiers who helped create it. In fact, the Army Museum's location is along the Washington–Rochambeau Revolutionary Route, the same route the Army's first commanding general took as the Continental Army marched to victory at Yorktown. To move the Army Museum to the Engineer Proving Grounds, you not only lose the sense of history that prompted its placement there, you also lose the synergy of putting the Army Museum near Mount Vernon and other historic locations such as Woodlawn Plantation and Gunston Hall.

What has also not been explained in detail by the Department of the Army is why the museum's land area requirement has doubled from 60 to 125 acres. Last year, I met with employees from Universal City Property Management and former Army officials who were advocating an interactive museum where "the greatest battles of U.S. history explode to life in a multi-sensory interactive 4-D". While the Army quickly dismissed this unsolicited proposal as "dead on arrival", Universal City's proposed location and size is strikingly similar to the existing site location and size of the Army Museum on the western side of the Engineer Proving Grounds. One question I hope this committee will be able to help the Fairfax County Board answer is, how is the current "destination concept" of the Army Museum different? The proposed alternative to turn the museum into a stand-alone theme park in museum wrappings and place it on the EPG adjacent to one of the most security sensitive commands in the Defense Department structure defies common sense. How the National Museum of the United States Army can retain the solemnity of its soldiers' sacrifices over the past 231 years next to entertainment, hotels, conference centers and 4-D rides is beyond my understanding. Please keep the museum on or near Richmond Highway.

We stand ready to truly partner with the Army. The Army and Fort Belvoir has always said they want to be a good neighbor. Well, here's a chance to prove it.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.